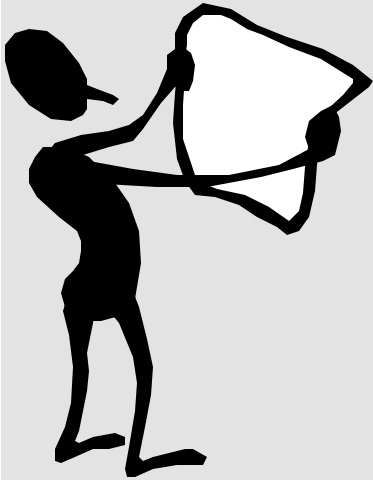




“What lies behind us and what lies before us  
are tiny matters compared to  
what lies within us.”

*-Ralph Waldo Emerson*

**Who are stakeholders?**

- Residents (property owners and renters)
- School officials
- Religious institutions
- Community groups
- Business representatives

**Why is involving all community stakeholders important?**

- A greater sense of Plan ownership is developed.
- Increased determination at implementation time.
- Accurate reflection of the needs and concerns of the neighborhood.
- With so many persons involved in and supporting a Plan, public officials are strongly encouraged to use the plan as a guide for decision making.

A Goals and Strategies Report is a written document that provides a quick snapshot of a community's values and can help focus a community's energy on commonly agreed upon desires and needs. Goals and Strategies Reports identify things your neighborhood would like to have happen (goals); features it would like to see changed (improvements); and efforts the community can undertake to make neighborhood improvement a reality (strategies). A Goals and Strategies Report can stand alone or serve as a basis for developing a future neighborhood plan. Once complete, the reports are distributed to the Mayor, City Council members, and appropriate City departments. Goals and Strategies Reports are not adopted by the Planning Commission or City Council.

Creating a Goals and Strategies Report focuses neighborhood energies and organizes its efforts so that goals can be accomplished within a short-term period. The planning process can end with the Goals and Strategies Report or it can evolve into writing and implementing a plan.

During the planning process, community stakeholders:

- discuss issues - what works/what could be better?
- develop priorities - what should be done first, second, etc.?
- develop goals - what are the community's overall desires?
- and create strategies - what specific tasks can a community undertake to achieve their goals?

The Planning Department provides services to organizations that seek assistance in developing a 1) Goals and Strategies Report, 2) Neighborhood Plan or 3) Community Plan. The Goals and Strategies Report is the least time consuming of the three, and can represent the first official step of the community or neighborhood plan process. A Goals and Strategies Report is a quick assessment of a community area, while a Neighborhood or Community Plan is more comprehensive, inclusive and thorough.

Community groups that are interested in taking the next step and beginning the planning process are encouraged to apply for staff assistance to create a Goals and Strategies Report. The application process is outlined in greater detail in Appendix 2.

## OVERVIEW

### Steps to Create a Goals and Strategies Report

#### 1 — Recruit Planning Team

#### 2 — Planning Team Gets to Work

##### **What happens?**

- Publicity
- Organization
- Land use verification

#### 3 — First Neighborhood Workshop

##### **What happens?**

- Welcome/Introduce participants, describe the purpose of the meeting, importance of the goal setting process.
- Review basic neighborhood information including area boundaries, land use, and demographic data (i.e. population, age, racial composition, sex, median household income, etc.) for the area
- Brainstorm on neighborhood strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs)
- Develop goals based SWOTs
- Develop and prioritize effective strategies that the neighborhood can perform on its own to enhance community strengths or improve neighborhood weaknesses.
- 

#### 4 — Prepare and Write the Report

#### 5 — Second Neighborhood Workshop

##### **What happens?**

- Present and refine draft of Goals and Strategies Report
- Discuss revisions and other issues

#### 6 — Prepare revised report, incorporating comments from Second Neighborhood Workshop

#### 7 — Implement Action Steps noted in Report



### Hints for Organization of a Planning Team

- Contact area leaders with flexible work schedules.
- Contact college students with special skills.
- Contact businesses willing to donate services or meeting space.
- Ask association past and present board members or long time residents with knowledge of neighborhood.



### Why Use Breakout Groups?

- Gives all a chance to speak (many more than in a large group setting)
- It is more comfortable for people who are unlikely to speak in front of the entire group.
- Prompts new thoughts and suggestions, as good ideas feed off of each other.

## THE DETAILS



### The Planning Team

This team is responsible for organizing and publicizing the work group meetings and editing the Goals and Strategies Report. However, for those groups compiling their Goals and Strategies Report without assistance from the Planning Department, the planning team is responsible for compiling and writing the final Goals and Strategies Report.

To ensure all viewpoints are represented throughout the Goals and Strategies Report development, your planning team needs to include all neighborhood stakeholder groups. Stakeholders include homeowners, renters, neighborhood associations, community organizations, non-profits, area institutions, universities, school districts, Chambers of Commerce, absentee property owners, churches, and businesses.

Because many different types of people have ties to your community, the planning team should not be comprised of only the membership of the local neighborhood organization. Do not forget to geographically represent the entire neighborhood when recruiting planning team members. The process would not be equitable if the planning team consisted entirely of members representing only one subsection of the neighborhood.

Make sure your planning team is large enough to produce results yet small enough to be manageable. The Planning Department suggests that your team be about ten to fifteen members. However, your neighborhood is best served by doing what feels comfortable. If your neighborhood is full of active volunteers who work well together, a large planning team made up of more than twenty members may be most effective.

The members of the Planning Team will spend time organizing public meetings including writing agendas, reserving the location, setting up, and most importantly publicizing the event. Section 5: Holding a Good Meeting, describes in more detail the preparation needed. In addition to these tasks, the Planning Team also assists in the verification of maps, reviewing meeting minutes, as well as helping to

keep the meetings on schedule.



## Holding Your First Neighborhood Workshop

Detailed below are the steps to perform during your first public meeting. (*The focus of Section 5 is how to have a good meeting.*)

### Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome participants and introduce the person(s) who initiated the meeting.
- Describe the purpose of the meeting, define a Goals and Strategies Report and explain why the planning process is being initiated.
- Illustrate the boundaries of the neighborhood using a neighborhood map. Describe a land use map, how it's helpful, and describe how they compare to your neighborhood association's boundaries.
- Review the basic demographic and land use data you have collected so that everyone begins on the same page. (*Section 6 details how to learn more about your neighborhood.*)

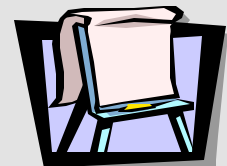
### Prepare for Breakout Groups

- Describe what breakout sessions are by explaining that the collective group will be broken into smaller groups to discuss neighborhood strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs) as well as goals and strategies.
- Break into groups by numbering off (1, 2, 1, 2, etc.), this breaks up couples and separates any "cliques".
- Review with participants the ground rules for small groups (*See sidebar*), then ask all participants in the larger group setting and again at the breakout tables to agree to following these guidelines for the day's discussion.
- Each breakout group should have two facilitators, one can manage the discussion and the second facilitator can take notes on the flip chart.

### Brainstorming SWOTs in Breakout Groups.

#### Ground Rules for Small Groups

1. **Be courteous.** Respectfully acknowledge the thoughts and ideas of others.
2. **Share your ideas.** If you have something important to say, speak up and let it be heard by all. The only bad idea is an unspoken idea. The ideas and opinions of everyone are equally important.
3. **Be specific and concise – No speeches!** Your facilitators bear the responsibility of controlling speeches in their individual workgroups. If just one speech is allowed to happen, it can lead to a windfall of speeches – causing the workshop to drag on forever, never producing clear or useful feedback. With everyone agreeing at the beginning to follow the ground rules, cutting off speeches will be simpler and group members can help one another abide by the ground rules.
4. **Listen to others.** Be polite and do not interrupt. Everyone deserves a chance to speak and be heard.



### Brainstorming Step by Step

- Define your problem (please note that the word "problem" is not necessarily negative). Write out your problem concisely and make sure that everyone understands the problem and is in agreement with the way it is worded. There is no need to put a lot of restrictions on your problem at this time.

- Give yourselves a time limit. Larger groups may need more time to get everyone's ideas out.

- Everyone must shout out solutions to the problem while one person writes them down. There must be ABSOLUTELY NO CRITICIZING OF IDEAS. No matter how impossible or how silly an idea is, it must be written down. Criticism is not encouraged.

- Once your time is up, select the five ideas which you like best. Make sure everyone involved in the brainstorming session is in agreement.

- Write down about five criteria for judging which ideas best solve your problem. Criteria should start with the word "should", for example, "it should be cost effective", "it should be legal", "it should be possible to finish before July 15", etc.

- Give each idea a score of 0 to 5 points depending on how well it meets each criterion. Once all of the ideas have been scored for each criterion, add up the scores.

- The idea with the highest score will best solve your problem. But you should keep a record of all of your best ideas and their scores in case your best idea turns out not to be workable.

The following definition of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOTs) and the process of SWOTs analysis should be explained to workshop participants:

**SWOTs** can provide valuable insight on everything from land use issues to crime problems in your area. Participants are asked to state a strength or weakness and its location. By both writing issues down on flip charts and locating them on a large map the group can gain new insight into their problems and opportunities. For example, a graffiti problem near a school might be addressed differently than a graffiti problem in a business corridor. The community also might decide that an area has a higher priority.

Examples of strengths include:

- Location and accessibility to downtown, hospitals, and the highway
- Churches in the area
- Historical value (of properties, area of the City)
- Residents (diverse interests, concerns and knowledge)

Weaknesses could include:

- Lack of code compliance on X, Y, and Z street
- Crime, gangs, graffiti, vagrants
- Vacant lots, houses by the school
- Lack of grocery store
- Poor relationship with councilperson

Opportunities and threats are activities that can impact your neighborhood either positively, negatively, or both.

- Facilitators should make participants aware that they must address strengths as well as weaknesses and opportunities as well as threats. People often tend to focus on the negative without recognizing the positive. Facilitators must make every effort to ensure that this tendency is avoided. Spend an equal amount of time on both the strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood.
- As you conduct your SWOTs analysis, ask the following

questions (give participants about 15 minutes to answer each question):

1. What's good about our neighborhood?
2. What's bad about our neighborhood?

- SWOTs should be recorded on the flip chart and the neighborhood map throughout the work session. When SWOTs are located on the neighborhood map, it may become obvious where your efforts need to be directed. In addition, this visual aid will assist your work groups as strategies are developed. An example SWOTs map is attached.



A work session meeting

In addition to the questions that will be asked during the workshop, the following methods of SWOTs analysis can help prepare your neighborhood for its first workshop. Assign a team of neighborhood volunteers to conduct one or both of these methods and ask them to bring the results to the first workshop. The results will serve as visual aids – allowing all participants to visualize the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats. These two SWOTs preparation methods are described as follows:

### **The Camera Method**

The Camera Method involves photographing specific areas of the neighborhood and documenting the location, date, time, and photo classification (whether it displays a strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat). A brief description of the area in question as well as ideas on how to improve it also can be given. A worksheet for you to use during your camera SWOTs analysis is provided in appendix 3 of this workbook.

### **The Camcorder Method**

Your SWOTs analysis also can be performed using a camcorder. For each segment you film, provide an informational narrative, which briefly describes the scene, states your opinions of it, and cites ideas for improvement. In addition to being viewed at your neighborhood workshop, it is recommended that you view your videotaped SWOTs analysis with Planning Team members, City Council, boards, and commissions.

### **What is Brainstorming?**

Brainstorming can be an effective way to generate lots of ideas and then determine which idea(s) best solves the problem. Brainstorming is most effective with smaller groups of people and should be performed in a relaxed environment. If participants feel free to be silly, they will stretch their minds and produce more creative ideas.



Presenting small group issues to larger group

### What is consensus?

Consensus is taking the time to find a final solution which every-one in the group can live with. Reaching consensus is not to be confused with gaining the majority vote. Even one “no” is enough to stall a decision. The process does not involve voting, but a blending of solutions. Although everyone may not see the solution as the very best, all points of view are taken into account, and all can agree to support it.

### Choose the Top 3 or 5 Issues

- Once breakout groups have completed the SWOTs brainstorming, participants should reach consensus on the 3 or 5 issues that are most important to the group.
- Once consensus is reached the 3 or 5 most important issues should be identified on the flip chart list.

### Regroup and Consolidate Issues

- After the top 3 or 5 issues have been identified, all individual breakout groups should reunite in the big group.
- Representatives from each individual breakout group should take their flip sheets and work maps to the front of the room and present their breakout group's findings to the collective group.
- After all the groups have presented, the big group should work on consolidating the issues of concern into 4 or 5 priority issues. Consolidating the issues of concern should be fairly easy, as two or three of the issues are likely to be similar. Moreover, if two issues are different but relate to the same topic, they can be combined into one larger issue. This process is what is meant by consolidation. Consolidation relies on the principle of group consensus.

### Regroup into Breakout Groups

- After 4 or 5 priority issues have been chosen, the big group should once again divide into breakout groups.

### Brainstorming Goals and Strategies

- Participants in each workgroup should then brainstorm goals based on the 4 or 5 priority issues and strategies.
- Take each identified priority issue and write a clear, concise, realistic goal for each. A goal is a general statement about what the neighborhood wants to accomplish.
- After the goals are written take each goal one at a time and identify strategies or action steps to reach that goal. The strategies should be SMART: Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timed. Each goal should have at least three or four strategies and can have more. Action steps should be accomplished in the

order they are to be undertaken in order to reach the goal. Example goals and strategies are given later in this chapter.

### **Regroup and Consolidate Goals and Strategies**

- After goals and strategies for the top 4 or 5 issues have been developed, all individual workgroups should reunite into the big group.
- Representatives from the individual workgroups should take their flip sheets and work maps to the front of the room and present their workgroup's findings to the big group.
- After the goals and strategies brainstormed by each workgroup have been presented, the collective group should consolidate them.
- Use the dot technique to prioritize goals. Display the list and allow workshop participants to place sticker dots next to the goals they feel are the highest priority for the area. Each participant should be provided with two dots. Priority goals are those with the most dots next to them.

### **Writing the Report, After The First Workshop**

As a successful neighborhood workshop comes to an end, it is important to think about compiling the information gathered and begin writing your Goals and Strategies Report.

The following gives more detail regarding the items in the Report:

#### **Cover Sheet**

The cover sheet can be simple, but still give the reader a little information about your neighborhood and the Goals and Strategies Report. Include the title, the name of your neighborhood or community (you may want to include a map or pictures of your area on the cover page), the report's authors (usually your planning team), and an acknowledgement that the report is based on the ideas from your public workshops (the dates your public workshops were held should be provided).

#### **Name**

Keep the name of your Goals and Strategies Report simple. Display the name of your Report on the front cover of the document.

### **Your Goals and Strategies Report should include the following:**

- Cover Sheet
- Name
- Acknowledgements
- Table of Contents
- Neighborhood Strengths and Opportunities
- Neighborhood Weaknesses and threats
- Summary of Goals and Strategies
- Description of Goals and Strategies
- SWOTs Map
- Appendix

“Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude”

*-Thomas Jefferson*

## Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements give credit to those organizers, volunteers, and staff members who dedicated their time and expertise to the Goals and Strategies setting process. An appendix should include the names, titles, and affiliations of participants who can answer questions about the report.

## Table of Contents

By providing readers with a list of the headings and their corresponding page numbers, a table of contents serves as a navigational tool, allowing readers to go directly to a topic of interest.

## Neighborhood Strengths and Opportunities

This section should outline the strengths of, and opportunities available to, the neighborhood identified by the community at the public workshop. A hierarchy of strengths and opportunities should be established with those of greatest importance listed before those of lesser importance. A sample strengths and opportunities section follows:

### Strengths and Opportunities

#### Good Location

- Close to downtown
- Easy access to major highways
- Close to schools
- Access to public transportation

#### Character of Neighborhood

- Safe feeling most of the time
- Family atmosphere
- Large trees in older area
- Wide streets, including X, Y, and Z streets
- Neighborhood not declining

#### Housing

- Variety of differently designed homes
- Houses are set back from the street, especially on 1st, 2nd, and 5th streets
- Stability of property values

## Neighborhood Weaknesses and Threats

This section should outline the neighborhood's weaknesses and threats identified by the community at the public workshop. Weaknesses and threats of greater importance should be listed before those of lesser importance. A sample weaknesses and threats section follows:

### Weaknesses and Threats

Traffic and speeding

- "Cut through" traffic on North/South streets from drivers trying to avoid traffic light at X street
- Dangerous intersection at X and Y streets

Lack of sidewalks

- No pedestrian entrance to ABC Museum
- Missing link sidewalk between Vine and Elm Street on Broadway

Area is over 50 years old

- Houses are aging
- Houses may contain lead based paint and asbestos siding
- Sewer, water lines, and other infrastructure are aging



Example of a wide residential street



## Summary of Goals and Strategies

The Summary section includes a simplified listing of the goals and strategies that were identified as priorities by the participants of your public workshop. Goals and strategies should be listed hierarchically, with the higher priority items listed before lower priority items. A sample Summary of Goals and Strategies follows:

### Summary of Goals and Strategies

1. Create and implement a **speed control/traffic/pedestrian plan**
  - by requesting city traffic counts on specific streets and requesting signage from the Public Works Traffic Division.
2. Maintain the **character of the neighborhood**
  - by planting trees, organizing clean-ups, and designating representatives to work with agencies and departments.

3. Improve **internal/external communication** between residents, businesses, schools, governments, and surrounding neighborhoods

- by encouraging use of the neighborhood web page and by participating in the neighborhood planning process with nearby neighborhoods.



Austin Highway

### Description of Goals and Strategies

This section should provide further definition of the priority goals and strategies identified in the Summary. Moreover, the Description section also should detail goals and strategies that were not assigned priority status by workshop participants. Once again, descriptions should be provided in a hierarchical manner. A sample Description of Goals and Strategies follows:

### Description of Goals and Strategies

#### Top 3 Goals in order of priority

1. Create and implement a speed control/traffic/pedestrian plan.

Initial strategies to accomplish this goal:

- The Neighborhood Association safety committee will take the lead in creating this plan.
- Request city traffic count on specific streets.
- Request signage from Public Works Traffic Division (stop signs, No Through Trucks, Children at Play)
- Follow-up with school district and request that empty school busses not cut through the neighborhood.

2. Maintain the character of the neighborhood.

Initial strategies to accomplish this goal:

- Encourage participation in the neighborhood Heritage Tree Program.
- Designate representatives to liaison with agencies, school board, city departments, and Zoning Commission to increase the neighborhood's knowledge and involvement in community affairs.
- Participate in the Code Compliance Department's "blue card" program.
- Organize an alley clean up.

3. Improve internal/external communication between residents, businesses, schools, governments, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Initial strategies to accomplish this goal:

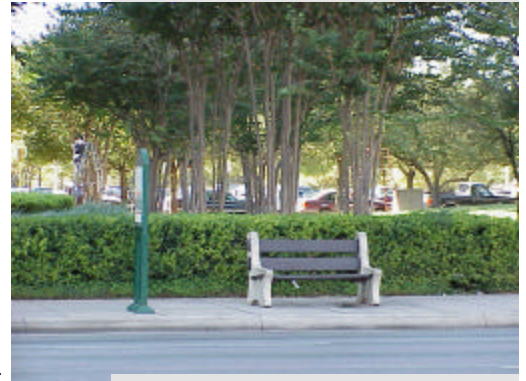
- Encourage people to use the neighborhood web page.
- Send neighborhood newsletter to frequently used neighborhood businesses.
- Designate a liaison representative to communicate with local schools.
- Encourage residents to participate in social events and get to know each other.

Additional Goals:

4. Better utilize open spaces.

Strategies to accomplish this goal:

- Form a parks and traffic island beautification committee to discuss and write a plan for improving, beautifying and maintaining the traffic islands and the park.
- Work with City Parks and Recreation to improve and maintain the park.
- Work with area nurseries to obtain donated flowers, bushes, and landscape material for the traffic islands.



Example of clean, maintained streetscape

## SWOTs Map

A SWOTs map illustrates community assets and facilities, such as schools, parks, libraries, recreation centers, and good housing. It also maps trouble spots and threats to your community like areas marred by graffiti, drainage problems, and dangerous intersections. The SWOTs map also can demonstrate areas where opportunities for improvement exist.

## Appendix

An appendix is a supplemental section of your Goals and Strategies report that clarifies or supplements the main body of the report. The type of information that you should place in an appendix contains too much detail or is too long to place in the body of the paper without impeding the flow of the material. Your appendix should contain material like the land use maps of your area if you decide to include them, the sign-in sheets and agendas from your public meetings.

### **Holding Your Second Meeting**

After your planning team has completed the draft report, the group should organize the second public meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to present and refine the draft of the Goals and Strategies report. The group should discuss any revisions or comments from the Report.



#### **What to cover?**

- Welcome
- How did we get here? A little background.
- Review the Report (provide all attendees with a copy of the draft report)
- Break into Break out groups for comments
- Report Out

### **After The Second Meeting**

Revise the draft Goals and Strategies Report based on comments made at the second meeting and create the final draft report. The strategies identified in your final report serve as the primary tool for implementing your goals. They lay out what will be done, when, and by whom. If neighborhoods do not keep on top of implementation, over time, institutions and bureaucracies may become forgetful. Neighborhoods should be prepared to follow up on the status of implementation and issue regular progress reports. This topic should be included in the Goals and Strategies Report itself as a way of reminding everyone that the finished report is not the end product, but a significant tool in helping the neighborhood achieve its goals.

### **Editing and Formatting the Final Draft of Your Goals and Strategies Report**

Editing and formatting sections of the report that you have previously written will complete the final draft. After you have edited and formatted the text to your satisfaction, print a copy and ask someone outside your planning team to read your report. Often it is helpful to have someone unfamiliar with the project help you proofread your final draft.

Your top two concerns when preparing a Goals and Strategies Report are content and readability. A good rule of thumb to follow is "consider the reader". Try to engage your readers in the planning process whether they live or work in the neighborhood.

The Planning Department distributes the completed report to all relevant city departments and the City Council Representative. The Goals and Strategies Report is informational.

